534 (arãtasu-ahãtu), and the connection remains suspect, the Nambikwara
789 not disdaining puns. (1) The same thing goes for the flutes of Pan,
[12]
[522]

1. For example, A1 mocks me when I am in the process of smoking: Kũkedetu ũkedetu: a smoker is lazy.

sometimes called duʔũru (a1/2) duʔũnde (b1) which would also be the name of the animal agouti (Dasyproctas aguti). It is no less true that
[503] several of the songs collected have been pointed out as songs of the hunt or of the harvest. A soldier of the Rondon Commission, prisoner of the Nambikwara for quite a long time, described to Roquette Pinto (2) a ceremony composed of dances and songs which had

2. Loc. cit., p. 234-235.

followed a tapir hunt. And a musical theme was pointed out to us spontaneously as the song of the tapir hunt.

FROM BIRTH TO DEATH

874 The Nambikwara woman gives birth (to be born: talĩttige, b1) in a crouching position and getting support on the ground by means of a vertical pole which she holds with both hands. During this time a companion pours cold water over the chest and stomach with a small gourd. The umbilical cord is cut close and cauterized with a live coal, then covered with a salve of warm ashes.

47. dõsu saĩkedutuʔãkedatelusu alõsu usĩĩnkedjutu inketu iakessũtutu ire ire iagekediutu (a1)
[When] the woman gives birth the placenta is buried in the bush; she is ill, she does not eat [for] a moon, a moon [and then] she eats again.

846 After the ceremony of burying the placenta, consequently, the woman would remain for two months under a taboo and condemned to relative abstinence. In reality, an exceptional situation is prolonged much longer, the period of abstinence observed by the husband and wife until the child is weaned, or at least until he ceases to be exclusively nourished by the mother's milk.

To describe the state of abstinence (inkãtu, "one is ill" [a1]; there is no special term), we can do no more than to transcribe our observations made from day to day relative to the family of *fire 6* composed of A21, a22, and a23. a22 is clearly distinguished from her companions:

846 784 1. She wears no decoration or ornament;

[107] 2. She does not touch food, neither to harvest it, to gather it, to prepare it nor to cook it;

3. She speaks to no one and no one says a word to her;

4. She avoids groups and when curiosity draws her toward our circle, she attends the distribution and exchange of gifts from a distance and in silence. If someone gives her or her husband a present (for example some beads), it is immediately given to the baby;

5. Every day she receives her food from her mother (a18), who gives it to her without speaking, and occupies herself with certain cares of the baby such as delousing it;

6. She does not bathe in the river, but washes herself with the water which she herself goes to draw in a gourd;

7. She goes away with her husband, sometimes for whole days, and, upon departure, follows him at a distance without saying a word; on these occasions, she takes the baby along;

A21 behaves similarly:

1. He does not go with the masculine group when they go hunting or gardening;

2. He rarely goes away, and then with his wife. The rest of the time he spends stretched out without taking part in any creative activity; they say he is ill (inkatu);

[162] 3. In the degree to which he and his wife perform the most indispensable activities, there is no division of labor between them. Either one buries the baby's excrement, or places in the coals the manioc received by a22 and a18 which constitutes their sole nourishment. Both are extremely thin, and appear very weak; their hair has not been cut or washed for a long time.

Toward June 20, 1938, this behavior was modified. For three consecutive days A21 and a22 disappeared for the whole day, doubtless to hunt, for, after several fruitless trips, they return (June 23 at 15 o'clock) with the following small game:

a. An irara (Mustela sp.);

b. Three bats;

c. Two lizards and their eggs.

846 252 The irara and the bats have already been put over the flame to burn off the hair. a22 begins immediately—and for the first time—to clean and crush a small quantity of manioc and she quickly puts a cake under the coals. At the same time she puts the broken lizard eggs there, and [108] takes them out barely cooked; she divides

846 252 them between herself and the baby. For the first time, she exchanges some words with her neighbors while laughing.

846 252 224 In the meantime, A21 has cleaned the irara. He gives the stomach, the large intestine, the small intestine to a2 (wife's sister); she, aided by her daughter a5, cleans the intestines, puts them on to cook and begins to eat them with a5 and a3.

A21 cuts the tail of the irara, cooks it rapidly, and eats it with his wife and baby.

The three bats have been given to a2 (wife's sister) and a14 (sister), who divides her lot with her son A16 and her son-in-law A15. a22 cooks the lizards and the organs (liver, heart, lungs, spleen, kidneys of the irara). She gives the whole thing to her husband, who gives a piece of liver to the baby and divides the rest with his wife.

All of these operations are carried out very rapidly in a sort of hurry, and are finished at the end of a half-hour. At 30 minutes past 15 o'clock, a22 lights a different fire from the one that each household uses, and places the irara there. She then goes to take her first bath in the river, and brings back some water in a gourd to wash the baby. Toward 16:15 the cooked irara is taken from the fire by A21. At this moment everyone has returned to camp and has taken his habitual place. A21 and a22, seated near the new fire, occupy a central position. A21 cuts the irara into five pieces and divides it among the members of the family, as was said previously. (1)

1. Cf. above, p. 74 f.

From that time on, A21 and a22 take up normal activity and are no longer distinguished from their companions.

846 Thus the period of abstinence is characterized by relative isolation of the couple in question, which is at the same time under a certain number of taboos (social contacts, baths, preparation of food, dress, eating of certain foods). It ends at the moment when the child takes its first meal not consisting solely of milk (in this [224 862] case the lizard eggs and the irara liver. This meal is part of a hunting feast offered to the group by the parents who up to now were under the taboo. However, the atmosphere in which these operations are carried out merits attention. No solemnity surrounds them, and the parties concerned perform them with the same routine and nonchalance which characterizes daily activities. It is not a question then of a ceremony with the psychological implications which this term carries, but of a collection of acts which must be done, and are done, with a minimum of attention accorded to their exceptional character.